

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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HALVES.

BY JAMES PAYN,

AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MASSINGERD," "A PERFECT TREASURE," "AT HER MERCY," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XIII. THE ACCUSATION.

ALTHOUGH I have spoken of brother Alec as an invalid, he was not such in the ordinary acceptance of the term; for, although he denied himself to guests, he came down to every meal, and was treated in every respect as usual by his hostess, which, I am sorry to say, was with no respect at all. It was not to be expected that much fuss should be made about a "poor relation," who felt a little out of sorts, but it seemed shameful that her tongue should be just as rancorous against the poor old gentleman, in his present depressed and feeble state, as though he had been in good health.

"So, Mr. Alexander," observed Mrs. Raeburn at dessert that evening, and immediately after the servant had withdrawn, "you have been telling pretty tales to Mr. Hastings, I hear."

This was evidently a feeler; some suspicion probably still lingering in her mind that the rector might have learnt more than he chose to tell.

"Tales, madam? I had no tales to tell," answered poor brother Alec, in tones that, for all my pity for him, reminded me of the needy knife-grinder in Canning's ballad.

"Oh, indeed," was the snappish reply; "then I suppose Mr. Hastings invented them. You want to see the doctor, it seems, and make complaints that your wish has not been anticipated."

"Indeed, madam, there is some mistake. I never expressed any such wish to Mr.

Hastings. No doctor would do me any good; no, no." The pathos of his words, which pierced every heart but one, only added fuel, I could see, to Mrs. Raeburn's fire; but he went on, unconscious of that, with his humble apology. "'There is nothing the matter with me, Hastings,' I said. 'I am not ill.'"

"You look ill then," exclaimed his hostess with acerbity, "and that is exceedingly unpleasant. 'Why doesn't he cut off that dreadful beard,' said Mr. Hastings, 'which makes our friend look so ghastly.' I wish you would, Mr. Alexander; I have always said I disliked it." Cruel and insolent as were her words, the voice and manner with which she spoke them were even still more harsh.

A faint flush crept over the old man's white face, as he cast—it was very rarely that he did so now—a mute appealing glance at his brother.

Mark shuffled in his chair uneasily.

"Matilda, I think you are going too far," he said, "in meddling with my brother Alec. It cannot make any difference to you whether he wears a beard or not. He is not your husband—eh, Alec?" (here the attorney gave a ghost of a laugh.) "He is old enough, my dear, to choose for himself, whether he shall shave or not, I suppose."

"I only echoed Mr. Hastings's very reasonable remark," replied Mrs. Raeburn, more mildly; not influenced probably so much by her husband's appeal, as moved for the moment by the displeasure evident in Gertrude's face, and the disgust (I hope) expressed by my own. "A beard, as I always said, does not become Mr. Alexander; and in every case it is an outlandish and unnecessary appendage.

People of position can, of course, be as eccentric in their appearance as they please; but that is certainly not your brother's case. I have heard you say, myself, that it is absurd in the chemist's assistant to wear moustachios. I mean nothing offensive, but I object to it on principle, as incongruous and unseemly. Of course Mr. Alexander will do as he likes, but I have expressed my sentiments."

Here Gertrude rose from her chair in indignant protest: it was her intention to have walked straight out of the room, in sign that she would be no longer witness to her cousin's humiliation; but Mrs. Raeburn, affecting to misunderstand her, and to have herself given the signal for retreat, rose with her, and they quitted the apartment together.

"Mark," said brother Alec, "you heard what your wife has said to me; what am I to do?"

His voice, though gentle, was very steady; more so than it ever had been since the change had occurred in his position in the house.

The attorney helped himself to a whole glass of brandy—he made no stranger of his brother now in that respect—and then answered, "I should please myself, Alec. You heard what I said to Matilda. I would say as much again and more. It is I who have prevented her sending away your parrot. I had a great fight for that, and she is at me about it almost every night."

"Do not make your life unhappy on my account, Mark," was the quiet rejoinder. "You mean well, but you are not strong enough to help me. How can I expect it, when you cannot even help yourself?"

"I don't know what you mean, Alec," replied the attorney, with an angry flush. "I am master in my own house, I hope. But, of course, there are some things in which one's wife will have her way; at least, that is so in England, however matters are managed in Peru."

"I see," said the other coldly.

"You say 'you see,' my dear Alec," laughed the attorney, on whom the liquor had begun to have an effect, "as if seeing was not believing; but was it not so? Did you not find your Peruvian wife rather inclined to take the bit in her mouth, eh, like Matilda?"

"My wife is dead, Mark. When alive, she was quite a different person from my sister-in-law."

"Well, you see, you don't hit it off, you

two; and it's a sad pity. Matilda is naturally masterful, and you having no profession are always at home with her, and liable to her little onslaughts. It's a good thing for a married man to have a calling, if it's only that it gives him a loophole through which he can make himself scarce occasionally. I could defend you well enough—I've proved it to-night—if I could be always by, Alec; but I have no doubt she worries you when I am away. As for your beard, I say again she has no business to dictate such a thing; but if I were in your place, and loved peace and quietness, I'd cut it off. Then, perhaps, she will be pacified, and not pitch into me again for a night or two about the bird."

The openness with which the attorney was accustomed to discuss his domestic affairs, especially when he had been taking his favourite liquor, had long ceased to astonish me; but I had never heard him confess his wife's supremacy so plainly as on this occasion. If he had nerved himself thus to acquaint his brother, once for all, that he was powerless to help him, he effected his object, since to my knowledge brother Alec never made appeal or remonstrance to him again.

Except in matters relating to his own profession, wherein Mark was singularly discreet, and, indeed, so reticent in communicating them that I suppose no articulated clerk ever learned less law than I did, during the space of time that I remained under his tutorship, he was, as I have said, by nature open and unreserved; this characteristic was shared by his son John, in whom it was even heightened by a total want of perception of the necessity of concealment; while Mrs. Raeburn, from long habit of despotic rule, rode roughshod over everybody, and gave herself no trouble to put the velvet glove on her iron hand. Thus it happened that, though but a youthful student of human nature, the proceedings of the Raeburn family—for poor brother Alec was a character one might run and read—and even their motives, were as clear to me as though I had been a Machiavelli. Nor was Gertrude Floyd any enigma to me by this time. Although no vows had been interchanged between us, I felt myself secure of her affections, and fondly hoped that only patience was needed on my part, to enjoy a happiness of which I nevertheless acknowledged myself undeserving. Every day brought for me some new proof of her generosity and spirit; and I watched her

ripening charms of mind and body, as the child watches the peach that has been promised to him ripening on the garden wall, without a thought of the canker-worm, or of the thief. Indeed, who could be the thief in this case, even in design, save the volatile John, of whose rivalry I knew I need entertain no fears?

Thus then stood matters at the Priory, when a circumstance occurred which placed the unhappy dependent on his brother's bounty in even a more humiliating position than he had yet occupied, while it also threatened to deprive him of the sympathy entertained for him by those who claimed to be his friends. This sympathy was just then at its height, since the poor fellow had actually submitted to the personal degradation suggested by his implacable hostess, and parted with his venerable beard. I am aware of the ludicrous ideas that such a sacrifice cannot but suggest. "The manly growth that fringed his chin" is a line which tries the gravity of even the readers of an epic; and how, therefore, is it possible to make such matters serious in plain prose? Yet the personal indignity inflicted on brother Alec, considering his age, and kinship, and forlorn condition, was as great as it is possible to conceive, and stirred the indignation of all beholders—fortunately by this time confined to the family circle. There was one feature in the case that might have made even Mrs. Raeburn herself, had she not been as emotionless as a millstone—namely, that the change thus wrought in the old man's appearance brought out his likeness to her son in the most extraordinary manner. The lines and wrinkles in the old man's face were already mirrored in that of the young one, produced there, I fancy, partly by his tricks of grimacing; and now that the dignity which the beard always gives to the aged was gone, there was really little but the grey head—except that the depressed and broken manner contrasted strongly enough with John's upstart and graceless ways—to distinguish uncle from nephew.

However, "Well, Mr. Alexander, I call that a great improvement; you really do look now like a civilised being," was all the remark that the old man's compliance with her wishes drew from his sister-in-law. If he had hoped to conciliate her by his obedience, he was mistaken indeed.

A few days after this a letter arrived by the afternoon's post for Mrs. Raeburn, the contents of which (for it happened

that she received it at the dinner-table) appeared to disturb her exceedingly.

"What is it, Matilda?" inquired the attorney anxiously. He was always anxious about letters, but of late months I had noticed that this habit had greatly increased with him. He did not drink more than usual in my presence, but I had a suspicion that he had taken to do so more and more in private, and that his nerves were beginning to be affected.

"Never mind just now, Mark; you will all hear soon enough," was his wife's reply, delivered in her most frigid tone; and presently, when the servant had left the room, we did hear.

"Mr. Alexander," said she, with stately calm, "this communication concerns you nearly, and myself in a more remote degree. Am I favoured, sir, with your attention?"

This question, which was shot out with amazing sharpness, startled brother Alec not a little. He had grown so accustomed to be the object of his sister-in-law's remarks, which partook largely of the style of a judge's address to the prisoner at the bar, and always ended in a pretty severe sentence, that he rarely raised his head when she addressed him, but he looked up now with a grave and deprecating air, and said, "I am quite at your service, madam, I assure you."

"So you say, sir, and so you would have others believe, I know. It is part of your plan to be always submissive and yielding. It has brought you a great deal of sympathy in this house, and as, no doubt, you also intended, considerable opprobrium upon myself. As for me, however, I have cared nothing for that, since I have been actuated solely by a sense of duty. I made a tolerable guess at your character when I first set eyes upon you."

"Matilda!" exclaimed the attorney in mild expostulation, for, either from weakness or want of will, he now hardly held up the shield at all between his brother and these cruel darts. "Matilda, I am surprised at you."

"You will be more surprised at that man there"—and she stretched out her arm, and pointed to brother Alec across the table—"when I have told you what I have just now heard about him: I have incurred much odium, I say, upon this gentleman's account, because I read him from the first, and was therefore not disposed to spoil and humour him. I have never permitted him—and I am now most thankful to say it—to have his own

way in this house, though, I trust, I have not forgotten that he was my husband's brother."

"A little more than kin and less than kind," murmured brother Alec softly.

"I daresay," continued Mrs. Raeburn contemptuously, "you would not be so glib with your quotations, sir, if you knew what was coming." Her dislike of her poor relative was so excessive that she could not prevent herself from flying at him in this cat-like manner, although it seriously compromised the dignity of her judicial tone. "The time has come, Mr. Alexander," she continued, more solemnly, "for the correctness of my judgment to be established. It seems that we have not only harboured an impostor in this house, Mark, in the person of your injured brother yonder, but a common thief."

An exclamation of horror broke from every lip save that of the accused. The colour came into his face, as it had often done under his sister-in-law's insults, and his thin white hands trembled excessively; but he did not even lift his eyes.

"This is monstrous, Matilda; there must be some mistake," ejaculated the attorney.

"Mistake!" echoed she, with a bitter laugh. "Look at the man, sitting there without a word to say for himself, and judge for yourselves."

"I will answer for him, Mrs. Raeburn," exclaimed Gertrude, boldly. "If it is a mistake, or if it is not a mistake, it is a falsehood."

"I am quite of Miss Floyd's opinion," said I. "It is a most infamous charge, whoever made it."

"It's worse than that," observed John; "it's actionable; and you had better look out, mother."

Mrs. Raeburn regarded us with complacent contempt.

"The mistake, or falsehood, as you so delicately put it, Gertrude, is at least none of mine," said she; "you shall hear whose it is, then judge whether it is likely to be correct or not. Three or four days ago I wrote to the Zoological Society in London, offering to dispose of a Peruvian Night-Parrot; and this is the official reply I received this afternoon:

"MADAM,—In reply to your communication of the 15th instant, I am instructed to acquaint you that the bird of which you speak is already the property of the Zoological Society, from whom it was stolen some six months ago. It should

have arrived at Southampton by the Java—the vessel you came in, I believe, Mr. Alexander—on the 18th of October last. The parrot had been bespoken from Peru, and our agent went down to the port in order to receive it, but found—

"That the bird had flown," interpolated the irrepressible John, in close imitation of his mother's manner.

"Silence, sir!" exclaimed she, so vehemently that John fell back in his chair with the air—a trifle exaggerated—of a gentleman who has been shot through the head.

"But found that the bird had been already conveyed away by a passenger. You are quite correct as to its value, and it is the fixed determination of the society to recover their property. Your brother-in-law, they have no doubt, received it in ignorance that it had been unlawfully come by; but unless it is instantly restored to them, without charge and with a satisfactory explanation of how he became possessed of it, they will be compelled to communicate with the police. Should any accident happen to the bird in the meantime, they will hold him responsible in the sum of one hundred pounds."

"You will not deny, I suppose, Mr. Alexander, that you were the passenger who took that bird away from the ship?"

"Mark," said brother Alec, softly, "your wife asks me whether I am a thief. Can you not answer for me, even that far?"

"Of course, my dear Alec, of course; but why can't you answer for yourself? Nothing can surely be easier. It's a simple question of fact, you know."

With a gentle sigh the old man turned to his hostess, "If, then, I needs must say so, madam, I did not steal the bird."

"Do not prevaricate, sir. I did not ask you that question. What I asked was, Were you not the passenger referred to who brought that parrot from the ship?"

"I was, madam; but I did not steal it."

"That is another subterfuge. Can you account for its possession? How came you by the bird? Can you tell us that?" And Mrs. Raeburn looked around her triumphantly; she piqued herself on her powers of cross-examination, before which many a domestic had succumbed in tears.

"You wish to hear how I came by Chico?" answered the old man, quietly.

"Nay, madam; I will not tell you that."

"You will not? That means you dare not!"

Brother Alec's pale face worked convulsively. It was some time before he found voice to say:

"You have my answer, madam, and it is final."

"Very good, sir, perhaps you will be more communicative to the police. The parrot will be sent to-morrow morning to its rightful owners. I am sorry, for your sake, that the serpents have been destroyed, since a donation of them might have been considered in the way of amends. As to an explanation of how you became possessed of the bird, I have only one to offer."

"But, Mrs. Ræburn—" appealed Gertrude.

"No, Gertrude, I must decline to listen to you. The matter is too serious to be made the subject of sentimental interference. If, as I guess, you were about to propose to pay the hundred pounds for this worthless fellow, I will not permit it; that would be, as my husband will tell you, to compound a felony. The Zoological Society may, perhaps, be content with the restitution of their property; but I am not going to run the risk of seeing the officers of the law enter my doors in search of a felon. After to-day, your brother will find a home for himself elsewhere. He shall stay no longer under this roof."

"But this is being very precipitate, Matilda," remonstrated the attorney.

"Precipitate do you call it, Mr. Ræburn, when this man has been our guest here the better part of a year—eating and drinking of the best? It was through my weakly yielding to your wishes that I have harboured him so long, not to mention his bird, which is not his, it seems, nor ever has been. I must assert myself for once, Mark, as the mistress of this house. You must take your choice between your wife and him; for either he or I shall leave this roof to-morrow."

There was not much doubt as to which of the two would have to go.

AMONG THE ADVERTISERS.

THOSE who lay down their morning paper without scanning the serried columns of matter provided by paying contributors, miss learning some things not generally known. Few are aware that a brewer is a professional man, and "the Ethiopian" a profession of many branches; that a child's caul is cheap at eight pounds; and oblite-

rated foreign postage stamps worth, one with another, about two shillings apiece, which they must be, since the fortunate possessor of ten thousand offers to take nine hundred and eighty pounds for the lot. Fewer, still, would suppose one must go as far as Kansas to see grass in its natural condition, or guess that the one thing needful for dispelling care is a musical-box. Our gratitude for being thus enlightened is somewhat diminished by our advertising friends bewildering us with riddles past solving. What sort of creature may a good jobbing Christian man be? Why must a certain company insist upon its office boy, aged twelve, being able to repeat the ten commandments, and answer the question, "What is man's chief end?" Why should a shopman be expected to take an active interest in a first-class trade, and in a quiet family? Why should the fact of a man being anxious to promote the temporal and social welfare of those among whom he lives, impel him to undertake shirt-making for a firm, or anyone requiring the same? Surely this philanthropic shirtmaker would be just the sort of man for the draper, who wants a Christian young man seeking a situation where he could develop the whole of his soul. What sort of support does the "celebrated actor" expect from the three ladies and two gentlemen, "totally inexperienced," for whom he is continually inquiring? What is "a housemaid entire?" Is "a second-hand lady's wig" a widow's wig? and what can anybody want with one, "condition immaterial?" Lastly, what is the meaning of "A permanent home in a large ladies' school; no payment required, but to sit with the masters, and fulfil a few little duties of the same kind?" Perhaps, if we pressed for an answer, we might come off as badly as the gentleman who sent thirteen stamps to be taught how to make home happy, and was told—"If you are as big a fool as we think you must be, for giving us your money, you can make home happy by leaving it, and emigrating by yourself!"

Murderous mysteries are hateful things. It is like stumbling against an ugly ruffian in a dark lane, to come suddenly upon, "Whereas it is believed that attempts have, for some time past, been made to poison a lady in Lancashire, a reward of One Thousand Pounds is hereby offered to anyone who may turn Queen's evidence, or may give such information as may lead

to the conviction of the guilty party." Charity suggests the lady's bonnet harboured a very big bee, although not quite so big a one as that nursed by the individual offering fifty pounds for the conviction of sundry evil-disposed persons, associating at a house near his father's residence, for the purpose of keeping him in a state of excitement, by means of magnetism; and even his plight is an enviable one compared to that of the unhappy P.P. who advertises: "Murder! Whereas, in consequence of evidence in my possession concerning divers murders, or suspected murders, committed in times past, I am under the painful apprehension that the strongest possible motives exist in certain quarters for destroying my life; and whereas, I have good reason to suspect that drugs have been given to me at different times since July last, and in previous years, and that I am now in danger of being stricken down by poison, violence, or disease, artificially created; and whereas, I have recently suffered from sleeplessness and nervous irritability, with muscular twitchings, ripplings of the blood, stiffening of the fingers, etc., and am now suffering from incipient weakness of the chest:—I hereby offer an annuity of fifty pounds, during my life (with full pardon so far as I may be able to secure it) to any person who, recognising one from having been concerned in administering to me any noxious drug or poison, shall furnish such evidence as will prove a murderous intention in the instigation of the crime. This is a matter which imperatively demands the earnest attention of every true-hearted Englishman. I particularly desire that this advertisement, which is published *ex majori cautela*, may not (in the absence of positive proof) be considered as throwing an imputation upon any individual."

It is easy to understand that a man of education, great travel, and connection, making a hundred or more monthly by the utilisation of nearly forty years' study and dearly-bought experience, who could surely increase his income five or ten-fold, with extra capital and assistance, would be glad to meet a party of education to join him; but it is not so obvious why he should give the preference to a dark-eyed Scotch lawyer or doctor. Such a limitation is in curious contrast to the notification of the young man about to start a business, certain to realise thousands yearly, that he would not object "to

either sex as a partner." He is evidently ready to combine sentiment with business, like the modest youth possessing an infallible system for winning two hundred thousand francs at roulette, who is in quest of a widow or spinster, with a capital of ten thousand francs, willing to associate in the venture. Since wife and husband seekers have rejoiced in a journal specially devoted to their interests, matrimonial advertisements have passed out of the category of curiosities; but four years ago we clipped the following unique specimen from the *Morning Post*:—"A lady, who must shortly leave a near and dear relation, is very desirous to find a suitable helpmeet for him. Although she has a large circle of female friends, there is not one of them he would have. Under these circumstances she avails herself of the medium of an advertisement. Any lady disposed to assume the duties of a most important sphere of usefulness, and to dedicate herself to works of piety and charity, will have a providential opening. The lady applicant must see the importance of taking up her abode with the advertiser, in order to form her acquaintance. It is requested none should apply who is much younger than thirty years of age, and certainly not much above forty. Her friend has ample means, so that more money, however otherwise acceptable, would not be sufficient to enable advertiser to bring matters to a prosperous issue. A good education, and being able to hold her own in first-class society, is absolutely essential. No notice will be taken of any answer, beyond the returning of letters, where the parties do not seek a personal interview, and will remain some time in or near the dwelling of the lady who inserts this; for the obvious reason that, otherwise, neither party would accomplish the object of their mutual wishes. It would only be proper for any person ambitious of this high and honourable post to send their photo; and it may also be said, her near and dear relation, in whom she takes so deep an interest, cannot, she is certain, accomplish, now that she must leave him, all the good works he meditates." Very different is the tone and style adopted by a wife seeking information as to the whereabouts of her truant lord. "To lodging-house keepers at watering-places. A man named — of —, styling himself a coffee broker, has left his home and cottage at —, with a charwoman, who is passing as his

wife. He is tall and thin. She is very plain, aged between forty and fifty, with only two large front teeth left." A womanly bit of revenge that. Another lady gives somebody a bit of her mind, in the announcement, "Martha objects to pay the debts of the man with the Shabby Hat, unless he returns to his comfortable quarters at St. John's Wood!"

Can the man with the Shabby Hat be the gentleman who is anxious to dispose of his jewellery, already mortgaged for one-fourth its value; or is he that other gentleman desirous to raise a temporary loan, upon the deposit of what he delicately terms "documents relating to family and personal property," or the young fellow who, from adverse circumstances, is painfully in want of a few pounds? Advertising Skimpoles are usually more precise in their demands, like the Catholic who wants to re-create a position with fifty pounds of somebody else's money; the professional man who, from infirmity, finds himself involved to just that amount, and wishes to meet with a benevolent individual willing to advance it, and wait for repayment until the death of an aged relative, from whom he has fair expectations; and the gentleman who cannot save his family from deep distress, unless some wealthy and charitable person supplies him with one thousand pounds. A hundred years ago they did things in this style:—"A lady of very considerable connections and acquaintances has it in her power highly to promote the interest of a single gentleman of spirit and honour, willing to assist her husband, who is a person of reputation and abilities, with three or four hundred pounds, wanted on an emergency. Satisfactory security will be given for the money advanced, and a moral certainty of very considerable advantages will be demonstrated; therefore it is requested that none but persons of real fortune, integrity, and unblemished reputation will answer this." Mr. Puff, himself, might have written that, but even he could not equal the eloquence of M. Michel Monceau's appeal to the wealthy of this world:—"It is youth, education, and sentiment which, united with riches, constitute the charm of human life. I am young, well-educated, and possessed of feeling, but—alas! I am not wealthy. Now which of you, who have a surplus of riches, is willing to bestow a share upon me? Do not offer a smaller sum than ten thousand pounds; for to accept less

than that would be to beg!" Impudent though he be, M. Monceau deserves better fortune than the penitent publican who, being engaged in the liquor traffic, in a paying business of his own, which he has conducted for some years, feels a conscientious objection to continuing in the trade, on account of the widespread misery the drinking habits of the people is causing. He therefore takes this somewhat strange way of appealing to the public, believing that there are many who would help him to obtain some suitable and permanent situation, to support his family; it being possible that, if he relinquishes his trade, his example and experience may be useful to those who are concerned to stop the spread of intemperance. If that permanent situation was forthcoming, there is some hope for the good mother who asks, "Will a rich maiden lady name after her a little girl, just born, very pretty and highly respectable?"

An Englishman, speaking French fluently, possessing the united virtues of a teetotaller, an early riser, a hard worker, a good walker, and an honest man, ought not to lack employment, when ready either to keep books, to call for orders, or to serve behind a counter. But even he is surpassed by the American genius, who is competent to take charge of any department of a printing or publishing establishment, and particularly suited to act as local preacher or as pastor of a small evangelical church; whose aid would be invaluable to a dentist or chiropodist; and who would not mind undertaking to instruct a select class of young ladies in the higher branches, or, if need were, accepting a professorship to teach ornamental painting and penmanship, geometry, trigonometry, and many like sciences; and failing that, would cheerfully accept a position as a bass singer in a choir, and board with a family decidedly pious. But for a man capable of making himself generally useful, commend us to the confident worthy who advertised his qualifications in this sprightly fashion:—"Do you want a servant? Necessity prompts the question. The advertiser offers his services to any lady or gentleman, company or others, in want of a truly faithful, confidential servant, in any capacity not menial, where a practical knowledge of human nature in various parts of the world would be available. Could undertake any affairs of small or great importance, where talent, inviolable secrecy, or good address would be neces-

sary. Has moved in the best and worst societies, without being contaminated by either. Has never been a servant; begs to recommend himself as one who knows his place. Is moral, temperate, middle-aged. No objection to any part of the world. Could advise any capitalist wishing to increase his income and have the control of his own money. Could act as secretary or valet to any lady or gentleman. Can give advice or hold his tongue, sing, dance, play, fence, box, preach a sermon, tell a story, be grave or gay, ridiculous or sublime; or do anything, from the curling of a peruke to the storming of a citadel, but never to excel his master." It is a pity this perfect gentleman's gentleman could not have paired off with the lady ambitious of presiding at the table and superintending the household of a single gentleman, who described herself as agreeable, becoming, careful, desirable, English, generous, honest, industrious, judicious, keen, lively, merry, natty, obedient, philosophic, quiet, regular, sociable, tasteful, useful, vivacious, womanish, Xantippish, youthful, zealous, &c. Generally speaking, ladies desirous of becoming housekeepers are content with proclaiming themselves very domesticated, thoroughly domesticated, practically domesticated, or domesticated in every department. A lady-like widow without family, however, goes a little farther, and tells us she would be found an acquisition in a bachelor's establishment, as lady-housekeeper or companion. Another recommends herself, oddly enough, as "a married lady, whose husband has committed bigamy and left England;" and a third, wishing to act as housekeeper to a mechanic, rather unnecessarily observes, "a comfortable home more an object than a large salary."

"Never give your reasons," said a wise judge. Had a lady in search of a really plain governess borne the advice in mind, she would have notified her objection to "brilliancy of conversation, fascination of manner, and symmetry of form," without adding significantly, "as the father is much at home, and there are grown-up sons." Another advertiser with a home grievance entreats to be informed where he can find a treasure in the shape of a good general servant, able to cook meat, fish, and vegetables, fit to be eaten, who can neither read nor write, or knows anything about tatting, crochet, or embroidery. And a gentleman who disdains plain prose, sings: "Required, by a gent,

near to Bromley, in Kent, a cook on plain cooking plainly intent. She need not make entremets, sauces, or jellies, that cause indigestion and irritate bellies; enough if she's able to serve up a dinner that won't make her master a dyspeptic grinner. If asked to bake bread, no excuse she must utter; must be able to churn and to make melted butter. If these she can do—eke boil a potato, and cook well a chop, with a sauce called tomato; the writer won't care to apply further test, that she's up to her work, and knows all the rest. She must be honest, industrious, sober, and clean; neat in her garb, not a highly-dressed quean; and must be content, whatever her age is, with sugar and tea, and twenty pounds wages!"

Old bills of fare, unless very old indeed, are not amusing reading. It would be difficult to find a pendant to one issued in 1820, by Frampton, landlord of the King of Prussia, in Wych-street, under the heading, "Theatre of Epicurean Variety." After a short preamble, stating that this compact, comfortable, snug, and cosy little theatre is open for the Winter Season, and that tickets of admission may be had for the separate branches of the entertainment, the following details are "displayed" in proper playbill fashion—a form space will not allow us to imitate. "During the week the following entertainments will be presented. A favourite Burletta, in one act, called Something Like Breakfast. The chief characters by the celebrated foreign performers Signiors Tea, Coffee, Sugar, &c. Price of admission, tenpence. Hours from eight to ten A.M. After which a Bagatelle, or Interlude, in one act, called, If You Like It, Lunch It. The characters by Messrs. Cheshire, Gloucester, Cruet, Kidney, Rarebit, and other well-known performers, who will be found ever ready at the call of the public. At the hour of three P.M., a grand Melodrama, in two acts, called, Here Shall I Dine. The chief character, on Monday, by the celebrated old Roscius of the Epicurean stage, Roast Beef; the other characters by the celebrated Murphys, assisted by the Little Pickles. Guards, Messrs. Cayenne, &c. Scenery by Messrs. Diaper and assistants. Dresses by Mrs. Cook. Music (a joint composition of Handel and Steele) by Messrs. Knife and Fork. Price of admission, one shilling. The powerful characters in the above-mentioned pieces will be sustained by different actors of celebrity during the week, viz., Monday, Boiled Mutton; Wed-

nesday, Roast or Boiled Pork; Thursday, Veal and Bacon; Friday, Boiled Beef; Saturday, Roast Mutton. At eight P.M. every evening the well-known eccentric Pat Murphy, in company with his friend Pat Butter, will have the honour of making his appearance in his much-admired hot jackets of brown. N.B.—A stout and venerable white-headed Porter, from the office of Messrs. Goodwyn and Co., will attend the theatre for the purpose of keeping good order during the performance."

Managers are so deaf to the charming of untried dramatists, that we fear the authoress of *The King's Banner*, "an Original, Romantic, Serio-Historical Drama, in Four Acts and several Tableaus. Period, the Civil War (from 1648) and the escape of Charles the First from Carisbrook Castle (to 1669), ending with the Restoration. Finished complete, July, 1869. Copyright secured, March, 1870," will not be overwhelmed with offers for her play, albeit she has provided it with a Hop-Garden Ballet, her sole invention and property; and with many new sensational effects, including a "Will o' the Wisp scene, ending in a Bog Adventure, during the search for Fugitive Cavaliers through the Forest," and "an admirable Ghost Scene, in an Abbey Ruin, with an original Ghost Medley;" and furthermore certifies that, "this great Drama" has been read and highly recommended by many leaders in the profession. The lady, at any rate, believes in herself and in her work; which is more than can be said for the author offering liberal terms to anyone who will skilfully correct and revise a Christmas book for girls and boys, and prevail upon some respectable firm to publish it. Equally desirous, we opine, of enjoying the honours without experiencing the pains of authorship, is a gentleman of literary habits, wanting the services of an amanuensis with a poetic imagination. Another aspirant, biding his time in a Dorsetshire village, appeals to Tory editors—as if it were their mission to run-a-muck at feminine extravagances—to afford him the opportunity of astonishing society with an original, brilliant, and powerful satire on the follies and vices of a fast and fashionable lady of the period.

Until Jonathan Wild's misdeeds spurred Parliament to action in the matter, advertisements for the recovery of stolen property ended, as a matter of course, with, "No questions asked." Nowadays, a victim of

the light-fingered tribe—unless, indeed, he be a noble earl—must be careful not to make any such promise. He must not speak out like the advertiser in the *New York Herald*, who put the thing thus:—"The fat gentleman who assisted on Friday evening, on the Seventh Avenue Car, can make fifty dollars by returning the watch. Better take it!"—nor must he imitate the American actor's:—"If the party who took a fancy to my overcoat was influenced by the inclemency of the weather, all right; but if by commercial considerations, I am ready to negotiate for its return;" or take for exemplar, "M. Lefeuve, 48, bis Rue Basse du Rempart, begs the lady in black, who does not like draughts in omnibuses, kindly to send him the purse she found in his pocket on the 1st of February, and to keep the money it contained as a reward for her cleverness." The best way out of the difficulty is obviously to ignore the fact that there is a thief in the case, like the nobleman who, upon being robbed of his portmanteau, advertised that if the person in possession of it should be deterred, by feelings of delicacy, from restoring it to its former owner, he would confer a great favour upon him by sending the letters and papers when their perusal had been accomplished; in which case, no allusions of a character to wound the feelings of either party would be made to the transaction. But if the individual in question was able to subdue his *mauvaise honte* sufficiently to return the whole, his generosity would be appreciated and rewarded.

Under the odd heading, "Wines for precocious Summer," we read, "A sense of visible summer may reject Port and Sherry, without acknowledging any instinct for the German or French Wines of June, July, or August. Hungary, a country of extinct volcanoes, affords innumerable opportunities of exercising those solvent properties of the vine, which have illustrated the lava-beds of classic countries with wines, almost as famous as their volcanoes. To these opportunities we owe our wines, which hold in a solution more subtle than is achieved by art, re-agents that exactly fit them to be the beverages of such a season." If that is a good style of composition, what is this?—"Country Parsonage, furnished, roomy, dry, commodious, comfortable, divisible, double offices. Vicar (elderly) would let whole, major, or minor part, and board (liberally) or lodge with tenant. Gardens,

stables, land, optional. Parochial helper or ladies' school preferred. Most healthy, picturesque, accessible; sea air, bracing; education, hunting, cricket, archery." The elderly vicar has evidently a weakness for the sex. He would have no sympathy with the single gentleman seeking board and residence in a respectable family, where there are no marriageable daughters; but would rather incline to the young man blessed with an artistic eye, who makes it a *sine qua non* that there should be at least one pretty female face in the sociable family, to which he desires to attach himself as a lodger. The artistic-eyed youth, again, would scarcely appreciate the horse-loving young gentleman who wishes to reside at an establishment devoted entirely to horses, on a very large scale; and he, in his turn, would look down with contempt upon that other young gentleman, desirous of boarding with a farmer, who only cares to have "particulars as to number and size of family," and "would gladly assist in the work of the farm, when feeling inclined to do so;" while all these exacting young fellows would decline acquaintanceship with the Unitarian gentleman, wanting "a furnished bedroom as sitting-room," for four shillings a week, "including washing, general repairing, cooking, and household appendages," and making a special proviso that, "if the chimney smokes, he will require it to be remedied."

The printer must, perhaps, be held answerable for announcing the performance at a Monday Pop., of Beethoven's Septet for winged and stringed instruments, and for inventing a novel method of constituting a directorate, by heading a list of bank directors with the words, "made in competition for the Queen's Prize;" and we may put down to him, too, the "undesirable reference given and required" of a lodging-house keeper's advertisement. Not that advertisers cannot blunder sufficiently without the printer's aid. The disconsolate master of, a missing retriever promises to reward anybody not concerned in the theft; one auctioneer announces the sale of a large and shady brick gentleman's house; and another asserts the situation of an estate is not to be surpassed, "the land sloping from the cliff, where it is upwards of four hundred feet above the sea-level, the house being nearly three hundred feet high!" Somebody wants to get rid of a splendid grey horse, calculated for a charger, "or

would carry a lady with a switch tail;" somebody else wants to let on hire a pony and cart, that "can read and write, and knows town;" "six dozen of prime port, lately the property of a gentleman, forty years of age, full in the body, and with a high bouquet," lie waiting a purchaser; and a journeyman pork-butcher "objects to Sundays." Refreshing bits of candour occasionally astonish us. A lawyer, wanting a junior clerk at a small salary, promises the difference will be made up in over-work. The advertisement of a wonderful hair-producing preparation runs:—"Whiskers, Moustaches, Baldness. An elegant crop of these desirable adornments produced in a few weeks;" and one of those accommodating gentlemen, so benevolently anxious to assist distressed householders by advancing cash on furniture without removal, prepares his clients for the inevitable end, by winding up his advertisement with, "A staff of men kept for taking possession." Some advertisers take strange liberties with the Queen's English. The inventor of a new propeller assures us that it is approved by classical engineers; a Glasgow man of business desires to assume a partner; a gardener terms himself a good plantsman; a lady declares her readiness to housekeep for a single gentleman; the proprietor of "a travelling clock" guarantees it to be "a perfect timeist;" and lastly, one T. S. proclaims himself a "corrector of the Spanish language, and compositor of French, Italian, Portuguese, and Latin."

THE TWO SONGS.

WHEN love was young, at brightening morn,
While high above the yellowing corn
The glad lark shrilled, to her whose eyes
Seemed homes of radiant ecstasies,
I sang. The glory of the time
Rang through the notes and ruled the rhyme.
The rapture of the sun-kissed rose,
When bud-bound petals first unclose,
Spoke from my lips afire from those
Whose sweetness thrilled my spirit through,
And the song's jubilant music knew
Joy's impulse in each soaring strain,
Each cadence low, each glad refrain.
I turned. Those eyes looked praise, and yet
Some shade of fear or faint regret,
Like a thin cloud o'er sunlit stream,
Hovered a moment and was gone.
Ah! is it that dawn's daring dream
Each soul must shape alone?
Sweet the caress that guerdon gave
For that glad song! Can shadows start
Beneath joy's sun, or passion crave
Yet closer clasp than heart to heart?

The night was young, the night-bird's trill
Shook softer than a far-heard lute
From that grey copse beneath the hill,
And then was mute!

Her head clasped close above my heart,
 I sang, for that the words would start
 From laden lips—a song as low
 As Spring's first streamlet's timid flow,
 Low, yet as happy as the tears
 Which fall unchecked from shining eyes,
 When hope, outlasting sundering years,
 Attains its paradise.

Whispers of trees, when storms have fled,
 Bear such sweet burden; odours shed
 By rain-washed roses through the night
 Breathe such serene and sure delight
 As this my song. I might not see
 Her eyes in that leaf-cumbered place,
 But closer drew her tender face,

And pressed her heart to me;
 And, through the silence and the dark,
 There came a gladness that the lark
 Hath not a song for. Love that lives
 Through sorrow such deliverance gives
 From fear, its shadow may not start
 To chill the clasp of heart to heart.

IN MID AIR.

"YOU'LL not get back to Chili that way, senor; not with a whole throat, that is. I'd sooner go from here across the Pampas, alone, in spite of the wild Indian horsemen and their fire-hardened spears, than I would try the smooth, broad pass of San Felipe, over the Cordilleras, here at hand. Five diligences and carrossas rifled in nine days! And not a soldier to protect the road! The saints be good to us, for the government of the Republic does little for us, here, to the west. Only, if I were you, Don Carlos Digby, I would not be in too great a hurry to make acquaintance with Diego and his band."

These were the facts of the case: I, the Charles Digby to whom my excellent friend, Don Miguel Lopez, storekeeper and alcalde of the pretty town of San Juan, had addressed the above well-intended warning, was simply a young Englishman, who had been long enough in South America to be fluent in Spanish speech, and to have learned something of the peculiarities of the country. I was—being by profession an engineer—superintendent or manager of the Great Hermandad Silver Mine, on the western or Chilian side of the southern chain of the Andes, and I had crossed the mountains to San Juan to arrange for the purchase and transport of provisions and stores.

But the homeward road had suddenly become dangerous and difficult. A band of robbers—headed by a noted leader called Diego, who had once, I was told, been a captain in the army of the Banda Orientale, but had rebelled, or refused to join in a military pronunciamiento, I forget which—were committing great cruelties on the

ordinary road that led across the mountains. In little more than a week they had stopped above a hundred travellers, had robbed all, murdered several, and put a few, who had offered resistance or were suspected of possessing hoarded money, to the torture. Such episodes of life in New Spain were too common to excite much surprise. Captain Diego was merely endeavouring, by the vigour of his early atrocities, to invest his name with a wholesome halo of terror, immediately profitable in the form of plunder and ransom, and which might not impossibly lead to the whole gang of highwaymen being bought off on their own terms, and taken into government employment as deputy - corregidors and police officials; but, in the interval, the little town of San Juan was crowded with travellers, unwilling to incur the risk of proceeding on their journey.

Among those thus detained was a young English lady, who, with her parents and her young brother, were on their way to Chili from Buenos Ayres, where they resided. She was a very beautiful girl, whose golden hair and bright complexion looked all the lovelier because the style of her beauty contrasted so forcibly with the raven locks, dark flashing eyes, and sallow tint of the olive-skinned Spanish senoras. I met with her more than once during my stroll through the streets and the plaza, but we were not acquainted, and it was by the merest accident that I learned that the name of the family was Trevor.

At last I lost all patience, and, chafing at the delay, yet unwilling to run into the lion's mouth by attempting the Felipe Pass, I hired a mule and a guide, and, leaving the stores I had bought to follow me at leisure, I set off for the more rugged and rarely-frequented passage called Las Neves, or, The Snows, an especially toilsome route, leading the pilgrim over some of the highest ground in the Southern Andes, but which was reasonably secure from brigands.

The first day's march was easy and uneventful. The puebla, or cultivated plain, was crossed, and then came the gradual ascent of the spurs of the mountain range, dotted as they were with hamlets, fields, and here and there the silent shaft and heaps of dross and scoræ that indicated the situation of some abandoned mine.

"It's to-morrow, Senor Inglese," said Antonio, the guide, a young Indian from the highlands above us, "that our real work will begin. This is a mere promenade, but

we must trudge hard and long to clear the distance, from the halting-place to Hermandad, betwixt dawn and dark."

We slept at a farmhouse, and, before noon on the ensuing day, I had reason to agree that Antonio had not over-rated the labours of the ascent. The path was steep, rugged, and broken, and it led amidst the most savage ravines and inaccessible heights of the stony Cordillera. No four-footed creature less sure-footed than a mule could safely have ventured to carry a load up so narrow and perilous a track as that, which wound like a white snake among the beetling precipices and yawning gulfs, which make up the most characteristic features of the scenery of the higher Andes. Above us, there soared volcanic peaks, crested with unsullied snow, and with flanks seamed and scarred by the lava floods of ages ago; while here and there would open out some darkling glen, choked by such a mass of tangled vegetation as to render it all but impenetrable to man or beast. There was but little sign of life, save that here and there some huge bird of prey, perched on a towering rock, seemed to survey table-land and valley as if to espy its destined spoil. The few villagers whom we met—miners, for the most part—were melancholy-eyed Indians, clad in garments of undyed wool, and wearing sandals of a quaint pattern, who returned my greetings civilly enough.

We made brave progress, and, after many a scramble in places where a fall or a false step might have entailed a drop of several hundred feet upon sharp stones or thorny shrubs, found ourselves, earlier than Antonio had anticipated, near the summit of the wild pass. Early as we were, however, we found ourselves preceded by another party of travellers, whose forms we could see on the narrow road that wound in irregular curves overhead.

"A bad bit that, English sir!" said my guide, as he made me remark how slow was now the progress of the group in our front, and how broken and steep the track.

"They are just coming to the Paso del Diablo, the worst arrow-flight of the whole road. Look, if it isn't just like a bookshelf in the cura's parlour, yonder in my village; only the books have the best of it. They rest safely there; whereas, on the Paso del Diablo, a stumble, or a gust of wind may send you—see!" And he tossed over the edge of the precipice

a large pebble, which awoke the slumbering echoes of the hills as it leaped from crag to crag into the giddy depths, too far for the eye to follow.

The Paso had really some fanciful resemblance to a bookshelf, being simply a ledge of bare stone, running along the face of a tall, gaunt rock, while the road, being narrow and utterly unprovided with rail, or bank, or parapet, overlooked the awful abyss below, at the bottom of which, faintly visible, a torrent gurgled amongst its boulders of water-worn stone. An uglier place of passage, or one more calculated to shake weak nerves, I had never seen, and I could well imagine that, in time of snow or storm, to attempt it would have been a foolhardy exploit. In fine weather and broad daylight, however, it could, no doubt, be traversed in tolerable security.

I looked forward; my eye caught the flutter of ladies' dresses and the outline of several figures, most of them being mounted on mules. Now, a mule is very wary and sure of foot, and partially deserves the eloquent praise which, in prose and poetry, has been bestowed on that obstinate animal. But, when you are quick of eye and lithe of limb, you, as a man, are by far fitter for safely treading an awkward path than any beast less agile than the hill-fox or the ibex can be. Accordingly, I preferred walking where the track was slippery and the risk of stumbling considerable, and had dismounted before approaching my friend Antonio's "bookshelf." The travellers in front were all mounted, and pushed on, as the width of the path dictated, in Indian file. First of all rode, as I judged, a girl, whose plumed hat danced gaily in the yellow sunlight; then came a stripling on a mule; and, after these, followed five other persons, two mounted, three on foot. Those on foot were talking loudly and gesticulating vehemently. Their harsh laughter came faintly back to us as we advanced.

"They have given drink to their guides, the imprudent ones!" muttered Antonio, shaking his head. "Lucky for them that it is fine weather, and a peon from the poblas, who knew the road, could—Ay de mi!" And he dropped on his knees, and began to tell the beads of his rosary with a passionate fervour, which would have astonished me more had not my business brought me much into contact with the strange, impressionable race to which he belonged. I knew that there must be a cause for this sudden outbreak of religious zeal.

"What is it?" I asked, impatiently. "Leave off, man, mumbling out the names of the saints, for one minute, and give me a plain answer. What is wrong?"

Antonio jerked his elbow towards the suddenly overcast sky. Around the peak of the giant volcano, to northward, heavy clouds had gathered; while, elsewhere, a thin white film, like flax from the spindles of the Fates, spanned the turquoise blue of the southern heaven.

"What is it?" I asked again, as I noticed that the mule, snorting, and evidently frightened, seemed trying to squeeze itself against the rocky wall.

"It is coming—coming!" cried Antonio, hoarsely.

"What is coming?" I exclaimed, angrily. "Tell me, scoundrel, or——"

"You'll know soon enough. El Vente del Muerte—the Wind of Death—Great Gregory, Rose of Lima, my patron, save us now!" replied the guide, as a lurid flash of lightning illumined the whole mountain panorama, and, mingling with the diapason of the thunder, came a shriek, as of an imprisoned spirit let loose, and a rush of bitterly cold wind fairly hurled me against the rock, to which I clung for support, while the mule, sobbing and panting, cowered down upon its knees. For some four or five minutes this resistless blast endured, and, when it relaxed its fury, my first thought was to creep forward on hands and knees and to look upwards, so as to ascertain what had happened to the travellers on the rocky ledge above. To my horror, the shelf of stone was empty. No; on it there remained, pressed against the rock, one slender figure in female garb; while near her, crouched down like a terrified dog, stood the mule from which she had dismounted. The rest were gone!

So sudden, so dreadful, was the catastrophe that had occurred, almost before my eyes, that for some moments I remained as though incredulous of the full horror of the scene. The voice of my guide, as he moaned out, "May they find mercy, whoever they were. Pray for those who are dead. Pray, too, for her who is about to die! Pobra Nina!"

The Indian's quick eyes were not at fault. It was a woman—a girl—and by her dress probably a lady, who was in mortal peril within a few yards of me.

"Come, Antonio!" I cried, staggering as I rose to my feet; "on, and we may yet be in time to save one life at least. Twenty dollars, man, if we save her!" I added, im-

patiently, as my dusky follower remained motionless.

"Not all the silver in Chili, cavalier would profit the wretch who should venture to cross the Paso, there, when Elborazo wears his cap of clouds, and the death-wind is blowing. I'm no coward, señor; but I'll not risk life on such a cast."

"If you won't, I will; and alone, too!"

I answered, hotly; and without paying any attention to the warnings which the Indian shouted after me, I scrambled up the steep and winding road, and stood upon the Paso del Diablo itself, being careful to keep as close as possible to the bare rock-wall, and away from the precipice.

Most fortunately, the force of the furious wind had slackened since the first terrible gust had exacted its early toll of human victims, or, otherwise, I doubt if the hardiest mountaineer could have traversed that place of peril. As it was, it cost me a desperate struggle to keep my foothold and advance towards where the girl stood, partly screened by a large stone that must, years before, have fallen from above, and which was overgrown with moss and lichen. Near her was the mule, its feet firmly planted on the rock, and its heaving flank all but flattened against the flinty wall, while its eyes, stony with terror, seemed to stare at the narrow platform on which we stood. I took in, I scarcely know how, all these details, as it became incumbent on me to creep past the mule, which partly obstructed the path, and, in doing so, to skirt the perilous verge of the abyss. I had now lost my grasp of the overhanging wall, to which I had hitherto clung with an eager clutch, and began to fear that the rushing wind would bear me away over the edge of the rock; but, though I reeled under the force of the blast, I kept my feet, and reached the spot where the girl was kneeling, with clasped hands and averted face.

Before I could speak, the mule, in the agony of its alarm, set up the screaming cry which its species utter under the influence of pain or rage, and the girl turned her head, and, for the first time, saw me. My recognition of her was immediate. Well did I remember that golden hair; those blue eyes, dilated as they now were, and expressive only of grief and fear; that fair, pure face! It was the beautiful English girl I had seen at San Juan, and, doubtless, her late companions had been her own family, of which she was, alas! the sole survivor.

"Save them! oh save them!" she exclaimed in Spanish. "Go to their help, sir, for the love of heaven! My poor father—my dear mother—my brother—All! all!—"

She wrang her hands, pointing with a piteous gesture to the edge of the cliff.

"I fear, Miss Trevor," I began, speaking in our own language, when the girl gave a little start and uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"You know me?" she said; "yet—" and she paused for a moment, looking wonderingly at me, and then slowly murmured, "Ah! yes—I recollect—in San Juan, yonder!"

And even at that terrible time a faint blush rose to her cheek, as she possibly recognised in me the strange Englishman whose eyes had, perhaps too openly, expressed the admiration that he felt for beauty such as hers.

This, however, was no time, nor was the Paso del Diablo a fitting place, for fine speeches or elaborate apologies.

"Miss Trevor," said I earnestly, "I am here to save you if I can. Every minute that we linger here adds to the chance that a fresh squall may set in, and, should it do so, it may be beyond human strength to get clear of this perilous ledge. Twenty yards off, as you see, is an angle in the path, by turning which, as I judge, we shall be comparatively safe. I will endeavour to support you if you will—"

She interrupted me with an earnest prayer that I would leave her where she was, and go to the rescue of her parents and brother. Their need, she said, was greater than hers. I was, of course, but too well aware that these unfortunate persons must be beyond the reach of any earthly aid, but to say so would have been gratuitously cruel, and I therefore urged on her the necessity for accepting my escort so far as the nearest hamlet or cluster of miners' huts, promising to return with ropes and men, and to undertake a search for her lost relatives, which, alone, I could not hope to carry out. She was very gentle and confiding, as a child might have been, and rose up from her knees, expressing her willingness to follow me. And just then some flakes of snow came whirling down, whitening the rocky platform.

There were, as I have said, some twenty yards to traverse before reaching a corner, by rounding which, as I conjectured, we should have quitted the ledge of rock and gained the wider road beyond. But twenty

yards, in some cases, may give cause for more anxiety than leagues of ordinary wayfaring. I had need of all my strength to support Miss Trevor's uncertain steps as she advanced, and, when we drew near to the angle in the path, I perceived, with no slight trepidation, that she was trembling like an aspen leaf, as her eyes were turned towards the tremendous gulf below.

"Hold me back! Pray hold me!" she exclaimed, almost wildly. "It draws me to it—it will—"

I understood her, luckily. I am one of those men who can remain cool and steady on the dizzy verge of a precipice. That is a mere question of constitutional temperament, for I have known the bravest, who had faced death on the battle-field without flinching, utterly unnerved by the terrible fascination which a yawning depth below the gazer's feet can exert upon him. The dread desire to plunge, and end life and fear at once, I could well appreciate; and I saw that Miss Trevor would never get round the sharp angle of the rock, where the path narrowed to a width of some eighteen inches at most.

By a sudden impulse, I caught up the girl in my arms, and by a mighty effort succeeded in rounding that dangerous point, and in reaching, as I had expected, the broader road beyond. The snow was falling fast, while still the thunder rolled, and the ice-cold wind swept howling past. Already the road was white with fallen flakes. Far across the deep valley, on an opposite table-land, I descried the walls of a convent nestling amidst trees, and with farm buildings and Indian cottages around it. Could we but reach it we should be safe, but the only way to gain it speedily was evidently by crossing one of those suspension bridges of native construction, which spanned the ravine from side to side. And this, in rough weather such as we were experiencing, presented no trifling risk. These bridges—which moved the wonder and admiration of the Spanish conquerors, and which still afford the only means of crossing some of the ghastly chasms that seam the mountain range—are apparently frail constructions of grass-rope, twisted by Indian hands; the floor, a strip of matting; the hand-rail, a cord of grass; while, even with a light weight to carry, the passage is, to a novice, more exciting than agreeable.

With these remarkable bridges I was tolerably familiar, although I had never before seen one which spanned so wide

and profound a gulf as that which now yawned beneath us, as I led Miss Trevor across the seemingly fragile construction, which rocked in the wind as a hammock on board a ship might do. We had traversed some two-thirds of the distance, when a fresh and more violent gust came howling through the pass, and it was all that I could do to prevent Miss Trevor from being dashed from the quivering bridge, on the floor of which we were both compelled to crouch, while the pliant matting that supported us swayed to and fro like a swing in a playground, and the snow and hail flew around us. The snapping of a rope, the giving way of a few strands of the plaited grass that bore us up, meant death, instant and inevitable. And, even should the tough grass-cords endure the strain upon them, we were in no slight danger of losing our hold from sheer exhaustion, and of being jerked from the bridge as a stone is propelled from a sling. Once I made a resolute effort to lead the way to firm ground, but the violence of the vibration, as we neared the steeply-sloping extremity of the bridge, all but tore me from my hold of the tough fibres, and we were thankful to regain the middle of the narrow web, with which we swayed, backwards and forwards, as we may see a spider swinging on a single thread.

What was that scream, so loud and so near, in its harsh shrillness? Instinctively we both looked up, to see, flapping its huge dark wings over our heads, a very large bird, which, by its curved beak, fierce red eye, and breast-feathers of ashen-grey, I knew to be a condor. Three or four times it circled round us, as if to mark us for its prey, and then, with complaining cry, dived far down into the ravine below us. I shuddered to think whose were the helpless limbs that probably allured the gigantic vulture to his foul repast in the gorge below, but our own situation was one which left but little time to spend in regrets for those whose fate might at any moment be ours. Then, too, the intense cold which, as often happens in the Andes, seemed the more intolerable on account of the heat of the morning—so benumbed the delicate frame of my fair companion that I constantly feared that before the storm should cease she would have sunk into that fatal lethargy that knows no waking. By chafing her cold hands, and, in spite of her remonstrances, wrapping

her in the loose coat I wore, which was fortunately a woollen one, I saved her, at any rate for the time, from frost-bite or stupor, although the snow and frozen hailstones whitened our garments, as we crouched waiting, rather than hoping, for deliverance.

We talked together—to have kept silence in such a spot and at such a time would have been maddening—and it was touching to hear how Miss Trevor took blame to herself for my present peril, all incurred, as she said, through the generous impulse which had led me, at my own imminent risk, to succour her, a stranger. She laid such stress on this that I could not forbear saying that I should, I hoped, have done as much for any one in peril; but that if I could save her, whose sweet face had haunted me in my dreams since first I beheld her— Here I came to an awkward pause, and felt as though I could have bitten my own tongue for what I had said, for might it not seem as if I were presuming on the position in which accident had placed me, and on the service which I had rendered? I do not think, however, that Miss Trevor understood the purport of my clumsy compliment, for she continued to converse quite simply, as a child might have done, often expressing her natural eagerness to procure help for her ill-fated relatives, of whom she made mention as though they must be still alive, though perhaps sorely hurt, in the valley below. I had not the heart to contradict her, knowing, as I did, that nothing short of a miracle could have preserved the lives of those who had fallen over the edge of the Paso del Diablo.

Hours elapsed, and the wind abated, but I began to despair. No traveller might come that way for days, while I could not anticipate that Miss Trevor could endure the keen frost of the coming night in that exposed situation. Yet, how was it possible for me, in her exhausted state, to— What was that sound? This time it was not the boding scream of the vulture, but a loud halloo from human and, as it seemed, friendly voices, and instantly I replied to the hail. Then there came, creeping towards us over the plaited floor, a lithe figure, followed by another, while the voices of those on the bank were raised in a cheer of encouragement.

"Safe and sound, Caballero! St. Nicholas and the Virgin be praised for that! Ay, and the senorita, too!" said the well-

known voice of Antonio, my guide, for he it was who headed the party. "Why, then, I'll say all my days, Inglese, that you bear a charmed life. Few who cross the Paso——"

But I did not hear the rest of the Indian's speech, for now, for the first time, I too grew faint and giddy, and realised the terrible strain on mind and body which the excitement of peril had enabled me to maintain, and, though I aided in lifting Miss Trevor's almost insensible form from the snow, I can remember nothing more until I found myself lying on the bed in a guest-chamber of the convent, while a bearded monk, in brown robe and rope girdle, was warming something in a pipkin over a brazier of glowing charcoal.

"Drink this, Englishman!" said the good-natured Capuchin, as he poured the hot wine into a large silver cup, emblazoned with the armorial bearings of some Spanish viceroy of long ago; "drink this, and then get to sleep again, if you can. Nothing like it when once you are warm and sheltered. Yes, yes," he added, with a smile, as he anticipated my question, "the young lady, too, is well, and asleep, too, I daresay. Heretics or not, you and she are welcome here, cavalier!"

I have little more to relate. Of the remains of the unfortunate persons who fell over the rock of El Paso, no trace was ever found, although, at Miss Trevor's urgent entreaty, a long and painful search was instituted among the glens below. But so wild and broken was the ground, and so intersected by snowdrifts, torrents, and thorny thickets, that from the first the Indian miners and herdsmen despaired of success, and, as I have said, the bodies were never recovered. So soon as my beautiful charge had regained strength enough to enable her to travel, I accompanied her to the city of Santiago, where her father's sister resided, and there, beneath her aunt's roof, I left her to mourn for the dear ones whom she was never more to behold. But our parting was not for long. I became a frequent visitor to Santiago, and was a frequent guest in the house of Ellen Trevor's aunt. There, after a while, I told her my love, and thence I led my bride to the altar, if I may use so high-flown an expression concerning the Consular Office, with its white-washed walls placarded with announcements of wreck and salvage, and other matters interesting to mariners, where we were married.

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

IF I am not mistaken, it was the author of Pelham who, commenting on the discovery of a pair of loaded dice at Pompeii, remarked that, if some of the virtues are modern, all the vices are ancient. I will not, however, undertake to say that the world is more virtuous than of old, as I well know that, if I hazarded that hypothesis, I should bring my learned friend, Professor Gleichgewicht, down upon me at once with his world-famed demonstration that blackguardism in man is a constant quantity varying from age to age only in its phenomenal or outward seeming, but remaining unchanged in its diabolical essence. Keeping clear, however, of the professor, I may, I think, risk the supposition that we improve in the faculty of appreciation, and in some few instances render honour where honour is due. It is true that this faculty is rather widespread than centred in the regions whence flow collars and crosses, stars and garters, and that these ornaments are rarely bestowed upon those who add to the health and happiness of the world; but this official neglect is, in the case of the medical profession, almost compensated by the rank conceded to it in modern society. It was otherwise in the good old times. It is true that certain learned doctors were mentioned only with bated breath and a hasty glance over the shoulder, but these awful personages were revered in proportion rather to their supernatural power than their professional skill. It is very doubtful, indeed, whether they ever really cured anybody, being, for the most part, too busy with the stars to find time to study the products of our globe, and they showed a curious incapacity when brought face to face with the black death and other forms of epidemic disease which, following in the track of war and famine, contributed in no slight degree to thin the population of England in its "merrie" days. The ancient physician—we may take it for granted—was at least as dangerous as the majority of diseases, but his humbler brother, the "chirurgion," seems to have been useful enough. It must be recollected that, in the "merrie" period referred to, there was plenty of need of the surgeon's art, and comparatively little for that of the physician. Taking into account the big wars and little wars, crusades, rebellions, the free exercise of the "right of private

war" by persons of noble birth, and ordinary brawls and squabbles, it seems to have been long odds on cold steel against all other ailments whatsoever, and there was little fear of a gentleman's life being protracted to the prejudice of his heirs by a correct observance of the laws of Hygeia. The chances were all in favour of being knocked on the head at a comparatively early age; but it is well known that in the hand-to-hand conflicts with sword and buckler, for instance, many more were hurt than killed. The wounded sought either the monks or the Jews, who employed as their assistants the barbers of the period, an alliance whence arose the famous Company of Barber-Surgeons. How closely the two callings were at one time knit together is shown by the sign which surgeons have abandoned altogether, and which barbers nowadays but rarely hang out. The well-known pole is an imitation of one formerly held in the hands of patients during the operation of phlebotomy—now abolished altogether—and the stripes represent the tape or bandages used for fastening the arm; both pole and tape being in olden times hung up outside the shop as soon as done with, to announce that there was a vacancy for a patient wishing to be "blooded." The foundation of the Company of Barbers is ascribed to as early a date as the reign of Edward of Carnarvon, but the first Royal Charter was granted to the Barber-Surgeons by Edward the Fourth and his amiable brother, the Duke of Gloucester. For some unexplained reason the barbers and surgeons did not pull very well together, and the surgeons severed the connection; but so much inconvenience arose from the jealousy of the two companies that they were reunited by the Act 32 Henry the Eighth, under the name of Masters or Governors of the Mystery and Commonalty of Barbers and Surgeons of London. This document bound the associated crafts firmly together till the year 1745, when the surgeons finally departed to the Old Bailey, and subsequently, in 1800, formed the body now well known as the Royal College of Surgeons in Lincoln's-inn-fields.

Barbers' Hall still occupies its original site in Monkwell-street, but has been partially rebuilt during the last few years; and the court-room, designed by Inigo Jones, must be sought in the rear of huge perpendicular walls. The room is well worthy of a visit. It con-

tains a fine portrait of Inigo Jones, by Vandyke, and a superb full-length of the Countess of Richmond, by Sir Peter Lely. These are notable enough; but the great treasure of the company is the magnificent picture, by Holbein, of King Henry the Eighth granting the Charter to the Barber-Surgeons. Every one is familiar with engravings of this splendid picture, which only give the faintest possible idea of its rich colour and wonderful finish. The central figure of Henry himself glows with gorgeous hues: attired in royal raiment of cloth of gold and ermine, crowned, and holding in his right hand the sword of state, the great Tudor hands the charter to T. Vycary, master of the company in the year 1541. On either side of the king are grouped the dignitaries of the company—seventeen in number—each being a portrait, with the name painted on it. A curious proof of the authenticity of the portraits is supplied by the cartoon for the picture now in the Royal College of Surgeons: each portrait is a separate study, made on a separate piece of paper, and afterwards pasted on in its proper place.

On grand occasions a handsome display of plate is set forth at Barbers' Hall, including a silver-gilt cup, presented by Henry the Eighth to the company, whose past-master, I. Chambre, was his own private physician. Charles the Second also gave the Barber-Surgeons a silver cup, as he gave a splendid mace to that famous Royal Society, of which he was the founder. Queen Anne also presented the company with a silver bowl. Two very curious mementoes of royal gifts are preserved with great care in Monkwell-street: one is the head of a fat buck, a present from Charles the Second; and the other is the back shell of a mighty turtle, given by Queen Anne. The head of the buck is splendid with gilt antlers, and the turtle-shell is emblazoned with the arms of the company. These memorials of bygone banquets are cheering enough, but as much cannot be said for the handsome screen, painted in scroll-pattern on leather and profusely gilt. To that screen literally "hangs" a tale, as it was presented to the company by a culprit who, having undergone his sentence, revived under the knife of the dissector, and, being perfectly restored, testified his gratitude by making a gift to the company. This ghastly incident is said to have given rise to the modern practice of letting criminals hang for an hour before cutting them down; but this

explanation and the theory brought forward by my informant, that a man, having been hanged and resuscitated, can cry quits with the law, together throw serious doubt upon the story. I find, however, that the famous John Hunter is said to have alluded to it in his lectures; and that, according to that version, the sheriffs were sent for, who took the man back to Newgate, ultimately to be permitted by the king to depart for a foreign country. There is no inscription on the screen to warrant the authenticity of this narrative, which rests on simple tradition and the presence of the screen, which seems to be of fifteenth or sixteenth century work. Another peculiar feature about Barbers' Hall is, that the ancient apartment, once used as a dissecting-room, has for many generations been employed as a kitchen. Not very long ago it was yet garnished with sundry uncanny hooks, and unpleasantly-suggestive boards and shelves—a sight of which has more than once determined the plainest of plain cooks to sheer off in an agony of terror.

Leaving Barbers' Hall, and following the surgeons from the Old Bailey to Lincoln's-inn-fields, whither they removed shortly after receiving the royal charter of incorporation in 1800, we find them established in the building erected by Barry in 1836. To would-be surgeons this is a dreadful spot, the haunt of the awful tribunal whose diploma is esteemed of such surpassing value. It is true that the diploma of a surgeon, and the degree of doctor of medicine to boot, can be obtained elsewhere; but the mystic letters, M.R.C.S., yet possess a singular charm, for it is known, high and low, far and near, that not only is the professional examination very severe, but that applicants for matriculation are tested in order to make sure that they have received something approaching a liberal education to begin with. A list—far too long to transcribe here—is given of the certificates admitted, as conveying assurance of sufficient proficiency in general education. In default of these, candidates are required to pass an examination in nine compulsory subjects—to wit: reading aloud a passage from some English author; writing from dictation; English grammar; writing a short English composition; arithmetic up to vulgar fractions and decimals; questions in geography; questions on the outlines of English history; mathematics, in-

cluding the first two books of Euclid and algebra to simple equations; and translation of passages from the second book of Cæsar's Commentaries, "De Bello Gallico." To these compulsory subjects are added six of the "optional" class, of which the candidate must select at least one, and may select four, for his examination. These six are translations from either the *Anabasis* of Xenophon, Saintine's *Picciola*, or Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, and the elements of mechanics, chemistry, or botany and zoology. Having either presented certificates, or passed the above examination successfully, the candidate is free to devote himself to professional study, either in the hospitals, or as a pupil to a properly-qualified surgeon, and after four years of work is permitted to present himself with his certificates for the dreaded professional examination. To go through this ordeal, the young surgeon must be provided with certificates of regular attendance, &c., but these avail him naught if he be unable to overcome the technical difficulties placed before him. Many persons may be under the impression that this professional examination includes, or should include, all the true functions of the Royal College of Surgeons, but they will disabuse themselves of this error on hearing that nearly one-half of the young men who come up for the matriculation examination are "plucked"—an ample demonstration, if any were needed, that this preliminary examination is exactly what is required to keep out the great army of the incompetent. What with examinations for fellowship, membership, and other minor affiliations to the Royal College of Surgeons, the court of examiners is pretty well employed, some two thousand persons presenting themselves for examination every year. The examination for the diploma is divided into a primary and a pass examination. About one-third of the candidates break down in the "primary," and are referred back to their studies for several months; while of those who get through the primary examination for the diploma, nearly one-third never offer themselves for the final or pass examination, which enables them to put M.R.C.S. at the end of their names. As this proportion is constant, it is impossible to avoid noticing it. If the proportion of one-third included those who merely "presented" themselves for the primary examination, and were "referred to their studies" for a

time, the phenomenon would be explicable enough, as simply due to the despair of the "plucked;" but that one-third of the successful in the "primary" examination, which confers no certificate of proficiency, should decline any further attempt to obtain a diploma at the "pass" examination, is simply incomprehensible.

The cost of maintaining the college, the library, and the museum is between twelve and thirteen thousand pounds per annum, and is met—with the exception of about one-fifth, derived from rents and funded property—entirely by the fees derived from the examinations. For the preliminary examination in general education, a fee of two pounds is required, and for the primary and pass examinations for the diploma, twenty-two pounds. Additional fees, however, are demanded from the lazy and the stupid. Any candidate who, after two consecutive failures at the primary examination, wishes to try again, is mulcted in the sum of five guineas, and any future light of the profession who breaks down twice in succession at the pass examination, is also assessed in a like sum before being examined for the third time. The consideration of these protections against the waste of examiners' time produces the at once saddening and reassuring conclusion that either young Englishmen are great blockheads, or our surgeons a "highly tried" and accomplished race. A considerable source of expense to the college is the library, containing thirty-five thousand volumes, and as many pamphlets, essays, and reports of various kinds. Hither come many thousands of readers, who are supplied with every convenience for study. The great glory, however, of the college, is its museum, unrivalled in the world. Other capitals rejoice in special anatomical museums, such as the Musée Dupuytren, at Paris; but for general comprehensiveness and completeness, the museum in Lincoln's-inn-fields stands alone. Its original formation was due to the celebrated John Hunter, who left at his death upwards of ten thousand preparations—obtained, it is supposed, at a cost of seventy thousand pounds—and which were purchased from his widow for fifteen thousand pounds by the Government, who presented them to the college.

Here are skeletons enough to stock another church of St. Ursula, like that at Cologne. Attending first of all to the genus *himana*—it is extraordinary how naturally

hard words come to one in the College of Surgeons—we find the skeletons of sundry remarkable persons in odd juxtaposition. Charles O'Brien, the famous Irish giant, who died in 1783, is said to have had a confirmed and, as it appears, well-founded horror that the surgeons would be on the watch for his remains. Just before he died—of too much good liquor, at the age of twenty-two—he made dispositions for his burial, requesting that he might be sunk in the sea, far beyond low-water mark. All his fears and schemes, however, proved useless to avert his fate, or rather the fate of his bones to remain above ground. At a cost, it is said, of three hundred pounds, his body was secured and the skeleton prepared. He was, if we are to believe all we hear, eight feet two inches high during life; the skeleton, however, measures only seven feet seven. Other skeletons are there of giants and dwarfs, and one of a middle-sized, thick-set man, not remarkable from an anatomical point of view, but otherwise interesting enough. It is that of a famous individual, no less than "Jonathan Wild the Great," who, in the language of his biographer, Henry Fielding, finally "swung out of the world." By the side of the skeleton is the coffin-plate bearing the inscription, "Mr. Jonathan Wilde. Died May 24th, 1725, In y^e 42^d year of his age"—a date which clashes considerably with Fielding's narrative, which sets down as the birthday of his hero that on which the great plague broke out in 1665. Almost equally interesting is the skull of Thurtell, the murderer of Mr. Weare. It is worthy of note that, while the head of Wild presents no special peculiarity of conformation, being rather small and elegant than otherwise, that of Thurtell possesses an atrocious "facial angle," the lower jaw, abundantly furnished with great white teeth, projecting hideously. Eugene Aram's head, again, is conspicuously small. Very curious is the result of putting people's heads together. The skull of the Baresark and of the mild Hindoo are hardly distinguishable; while those of the negro, the New Hollander, and the Tasmanian, differing from each other, differ yet more widely from the heads of white men. Horribly ghastly are the prepared heads from the Indian Archipelago, covered with paint and gilding; and supremely curious are the long heads preferred by the Caribs, and the flat heads admired by the tribes of North

America. Near these are casts of the brain cavity of various animals, showing how very small in proportion are the brains of the whale and the elephant when compared with that of man; and overhead is an enormous skeleton of the "right" whale weighing several tons. Further on is the osseous framework of poor Chunee, the famous elephant whose destruction at Exeter 'Change excited so much sympathy at the time.

Near the skeleton of poor Chunee stands that of a far happier creature—one whose neck was clothed in the thunder of applauding thousands—who took the highest honours to be compassed by any animal; a thing of strength and beauty while he lived; a name "written large" in the genealogy of his race for ever. This horse, so light of bone below the knee, was a Derby winner—the famous Orlando—who ran second to the fraudulently-entered Running Rein in 1844. The last-named animal carried in his white jacket first on Epsom Downs, but was disqualified for being over age, and Orlando received the prize of equine immortality. Born in 1841, after a short but illustrious career on the turf, he retired to Hampton Court paddocks, became the sire of many famous "flyers," and died, full of years and honour, in 1868.

Carefully preserved under cases are portions of the remains of the great mammoth—the thick hide, the long shaggy hair, and the soft wool which lurked under the hair, to preserve the animal from the cold; and then we come to more skeletons: the Irish deer, with his wide-spreading horns; the extinct mylodon; and casts of the gigantic ostrich (dinornis) of New Zealand, and eggs which perhaps gave rise to the fable of the roc; skeletons of the cachalot or sperm whale, with vast head, containing the cavity known technically as the "well," whence the precious material is shovelled out in great scoops by men slung from the top; the skeleton of the first baby hippopotamus born in this country—very piggy-looking; the framework of the dugong (of which bacon is made) and of the manatee: so heavy is this last, that it is wonderful to find it in a swimming animal. Farther on are the "scaffolding" of the ostrich and of the humming-bird; the curious skeleton of the cobra, with ribs the extremities of which serve as feet, and with mouth armed with the well-known hollow fangs for injecting poison; the agile monitor lizard; and the unpleasantly man-like gorilla,

chimpanzee, and orang-utan. Upstairs are preparations of various organs of human and other bodies, in health and out of health. I do not recommend this part of the exhibition to non-medical persons. The specimens and preparations are beautiful from a scientific point of view, but are hideously suggestive of the diseases one might accumulate in the course of a pleasant life. As I am puffing and blowing with the exertion of running upstairs, I am not cheered "to any great extent" by inspecting preserved hearts, in every state of fatty and other degeneration; or bottled lungs, in a hideously tubercular condition; and as the courteous attendant draws my attention to "nutmeg" and other unhealthy livers, I decline, with thanks, to look upon what may be the counterpart of my own recalcitrant organ. But my guide will not let me off the contemplation of the wonderful collection of skin diseases, done in wax, and presented by that great authority, Erasmus Wilson. In ghastly array are all the horrors to which the human exterior is subject, from leprosy and elephantiasis to ringworm, and those by no means agreeable disorders communicated by socks and other under-clothing, infected by arsenical dyes. Of curiosities there is enough and to spare. Old-fashioned surgical instruments, awful to look upon, are set aside in a small chamber with ancient apparatus for reducing dislocations—by squeezing, screwing, pulling, and hauling a shoulder or an arm into place. I suppose success sometimes rewarded those primitive efforts; but, judging from the pictures showing the treatment, the agony of the patients must have been excruciating. In the same room is the embalmed wife of Martin van Butchell, who looks terrible enough in a sort of upright coffin, and concerning whom a legend exists of his having had some object, legal or otherwise, in "keeping her above ground;" another instance of the facility with which stories crystallise around remarkable objects. Of other curiosities there are enough and to spare: a carriage-shaft pulled out of the chest of a man who recovered perfect health; a cast of Dr. Livingstone's arm injured by a lion; and a collection of needles which gradually worked their way out through the flesh of a woman, who had swallowed a paper of those useful but indigestible articles. The foot of a Chinese lady, cramped and

crippled according to fashion, is also here, as well as a curious selection of articles swallowed by lunatics and other unfortunate persons. For instance, a bad half-crown which killed the "smasher" who swallowed it; a punch ladle swallowed by an enthusiastic drinker; a set of false teeth "bolted" by mistake; the table-knife which killed the knife-swallowing Indian juggler; a box full of pocket-knives devoured by a soldier; pencil-cases, spoons, egg-cups, pipes, and boxes of dominoes, also engulfed by people more or less mad; and a box full of pins, eaten by an unhappy woman, who liked to eat pins, but liked them crooked. In the midst of all, towering over mere accidental oddities, and rejoicing in the immense additions which have been made to his invaluable collection, is the figure of John Hunter—the true genius loci—to whom the visitor makes a reverent bow at parting, as the best representative of that noblest of all arts—the art of healing.

A CHARMING FELLOW.

BY FRANCES ELEANOR TROLLOPE.

AUTHOR OF "AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE," "MABEL'S PROGRESS," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"Love in a cottage" is a time-honoured phrase, which changes its significance considerably, according to the lips that utter it. To some persons, Love in a cottage would be suggestive of dreary obscurity, privation, cold mutton, and one maid-of-all-work. To others, it might mean a villa with its lawn running down to the Thames, a basket-phaeton and pair of ponies, and the modest simplicity of footmen without powder. To another class of minds, again, Love in a cottage might stand for a comprehensive hieroglyph of honest affection, sufficiently robust to live and thrive even on a diet of cold mutton, and warm-blooded enough to defy the nip of poverty's east winds.

Lady Seely had joked, in her cheerful, candid way, with her niece-in-law about her establishment in life, and had said, "Well, Castalia, you'll have love in a cottage, at all events! Some people are worse off. And at your age, you know (quite between ourselves), you must think yourself lucky to get a husband at all."

Miss Kilfinane had made some retort to the effect that she did not intend to remain all her life in a cottage, with or without love; and that if Lord Seely could do

nothing for Ancram, she (Castalia) had other connections who might be more influential.

But, in truth, Castalia did think that she could be quite content to live with Algernon Errington under a thatched roof; having only a conventional and artificial conception of such a dwelling, derived chiefly from lithographed drawing-copies. It was not, of course, that Castalia Kilfinane did not know that thatched hovels are frequently comfortless, ill-ventilated, "the noted haunt of" earwigs, and limited in the accommodation necessary for a genteel family. But such knowledge was packed away in some quite different department of her mind from that which habitually contemplated her own personal existence, present and future. Wiser folks than Castalia are apt to anticipate exceptions to general laws in their own favour.

Castalia was undoubtedly in love with Algernon. That is to say, she would have liked better to be his wife in poverty and obscurity, than to accept a title and a handsome settlement from any other man whom she had ever seen: although she would probably have taken the latter had the chance been offered to her.

Nor is that bringing so hard an accusation against her as may at first sight appear. She would have liked best to be Algernon's wife; but for penniless Castalia Kilfinane to marry a poor man when she might have had a rich one, would have required her to disregard some of the strongest and most vital convictions of the persons among whom she lived. Let their words be what they might, their deeds irrefragably proved that they held poverty to be the one fatal, unforgiven sin, which so covered any multitude of virtues as utterly to hide and overwhelm them. You could no more expect Castalia to be impervious to this creed, than you could expect a sapling to draw its nourishment from a distant soil, rather than from the earth immediately around its roots. To be sure there have been vigorous young trees that would strike out tough branching fibres to an incredible distance, in search of the food that was best for them. Such human plants are rare; and poor narrow-minded, ill-educated Castalia was not of them.

Had she been much beloved, it is possible that she might have ripened into sweetness under that celestial sunshine. But it was not destined to be hers.

In some natures, the giving even of

unrequited love is beautifying to the character. But I think that in such cases the beauty is due to that pathetic compassion, which blends with all love of a high nature for a lower one. Do you think that all the Griseldas believe in their lords' wisdom and justice? Do you fancy that the fathers of prodigal sons do not oftentimes perceive the young vagabonds' sins and shortcomings, with a terrible perspicuity that pierces the poor fond heart like sharp steel? Do you not know that Cordelia saw more quickly and certainly than the sneering, sycophant courtiers, every weakness and vanity of the rash, choleric old king? But there are hearts in which such knowledge is transmuted not into bitter resentment, but into a yearning, angelic pity. Only, in order to feel this pity, we must rise to some point above the erring one. Now poor Castalia had been so repressed by "low ambition," and the petty influences of a poverty ever at odds with appearances, that the naturally weak wings of her spirit seemed to have lost all power of soaring.

The earliest days Mrs. Algernon Errington spent in her new home were passed in making a series of disagreeable discoveries. The first discovery was that a six-roomed brick cottage is, practically, a far less commodious dwelling than any she had hitherto lived in. The walls of Ivy Lodge (that was the name of the little house, which had not a twig of greenery to soften its bare red face) appeared so slight that she fancied her conversation could be overheard by the passers-by in the road. The rooms were so small that her dress seemed to fill them to overflowing, although those were not the days of crinolines and long trains. The little staircase was narrow and steep. The kitchen was so close to the living rooms, that at dinner-time the whole house seemed to exhale a smell of roast mutton. The stowing away of her wardrobe taxed to the utmost the ingenuity of her maid. And the few articles of furniture which Lady Seely had raked out from disused sitting-rooms, appeared almost as Brobdingnagian in Ivy Lodge, as real tables and chairs would seem beside the furniture of a doll's house.

A second discovery—made very quickly after her arrival in Whitford—was still more unpleasant. It was this: that a fine London-bred lady's-maid is an inconvenient and unmanageable servant to

introduce into a small humble household. Poor Castalia "couldn't think what had come to Slater!" And Slater went about with a thunderous brow and sulky mouth, conveying by her manner a sort of contemptuous compassion for her mistress, and a contempt, by no means compassionate, for everybody else in the house.

The stout Whitford servant-of-all-work offended her beyond forgiveness, on the very first day of their acquaintance, by bluntly remarking that well-cooked bacon and cabbage was a good-enough dinner for anybody; and that, if Mrs. Slater had seed as many hungry folks as she (Polly) had, she would say her grace and fall-to with a thankful heart, instead of turning up her nose, and picking at good wholesome victuals with a fork! Moreover, Polly was not in the least awestricken by Mrs. Slater's black silk gown, or the gold watch she wore at her belt. She observed, cheerfully, that such-like fine toggery was all very well at church or chapel; and, for her part, she always had, and always would, put a bit of a flower in her bonnet on Sundays, and them missises as didn't like it must get some one else to serve 'em. But, when she was about her work, she liked to be dressed in working clothes. And a servant as wanted to bring second-hand parlour manners into the kitchen, seemed to her a poor creature—neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red-herring.

All which indignities Slater visited on her mistress, finding it impossible to disconcert or repress Polly, who only laughed heartily at her genteelest flights.

But these things were not the worst. The worst was that Algernon showed very plainly a disinclination to sympathise with his wife's annoyance, and his intention of withdrawing himself from all domestic troubles, as if he considered them to be clearly no concern of his. Mrs. Errington, indeed, would have come to the rescue of her daughter-in-law, but neither of Mrs. Algernon's servants were disposed to submit to Mrs. Errington's authority. And the good lady was no more inclined than her son to take trouble and expose herself to unpleasantness, for any one else's sake.

Castalia and her mother-in-law did not grow more attached to each other, the more intimate their acquaintance became. They had one sentiment in common—namely, love for Algernon. But this sentiment did not tend to unite them. Indeed—putting the rivalry of lovers out

of the question, of course—it would be a mistake to conclude that because A and B both love C, therefore A and B must love each other. Mrs. Errington thought that Castalia worried Algernon by complaints. Castalia thought that Mrs. Errington was often a thorn in her son's side, by reason of her indulgence in the opposite feelings; that is to say, over-sanguine and boastful prognostications.

"My dear Algy," his mother would say, "there is not the least doubt that you have a brilliant career before you. Your talents were appreciated by the highest in the land, directly you became known to them. It is impossible that you should be left here in the shade. No, no; Whitford won't hold you long. Of that I am certain!"

To which Castalia would reply that Whitford ought never to have held him at all; that the post he filled there was absurdly beneath his standing and abilities, and that Lord Seely would never have dreamt of offering Ancram such a position if it had not been for my lady, who is the most selfish, domineering woman in the world. "I'm sorry to have to say it, Mrs. Errington, since she is your relation. And you needn't suppose that she cares any the more for Ancram because he's her far-away cousin. At most, she only looks upon him as a kind of poor relation that ought to put up with anything. And she's always abusing her own family. She said to Uncle Val, in my presence, that the Ancrams could never be satisfied, do what you would for them; so he might as well make up his mind to that, first as last. She told me to my face, the week before I was married, that Ancram and I ought to go down on our knees in thankfulness to her, for having got us a decent living. That was pretty impudent from her to a Kilfinane, I think!"

Algernon laughed with impartial good-humour at his mother's rose-coloured visions and his wife's gloomier views; but the good-humour was a little cynical, and his eyes had lost their old sparkle of enjoyment; or, at least, it shone there far less frequently than formerly.

As to his business—his superintendence of the correspondence, by letter, between Whitford and the rest of the civilised world—that, it must be owned, seemed to sit lightly on the new postmaster. There was an elderly clerk in the office, named Gibbs. He was uncle to Miss Bodkin's maid Jane and her brother the converted

groom, and was himself a member of the Wesleyan Society. Mr. Gibbs had been employed many years in the Whitford post-office, and understood the routine of its business very well. Algernon relied on Mr. Gibbs, he said, and made himself very pleasant in his dealings with that functionary. What was the use, he asked, of disturbing and harassing a tried servant by a too restless supervision? He thought it best, if you trusted your subordinates at all, to trust them thoroughly.

And, certainly, Mr. Gibbs was very thoroughly trusted; so much so, indeed, that all the trouble and responsibility of the office-work appeared to be shifted on to his shoulders. Yet Mr. Gibbs seemed not to be discontented with this state of things. Possibly he looked forward to promotion. Algernon's wife and mother freely gave it to be understood in the town that Whitford was not destined long to have the honour of retaining Mr. Ancram Errington. Mr. Gibbs did the work; and, perhaps, he hoped eventually to receive the pay. Why should he not step into the vacant place of postmaster, when his chief should be translated to a higher sphere?

I daresay that, in these times of general reform, of competitive examinations and official purity, no such state of things could be possible as existed in the Whitford post-office forty odd years ago. I have only faithfully to record the events of my story, and to express my humble willingness to believe that, nowadays, "*nous avons changé tout cela.*" I must, however, be allowed distinctly to assert, and unflinchingly to maintain, that Algernon took no pains to acquire any knowledge of his business; and that, nevertheless, the postal communications between Whitford and the rest of the world appeared to go on much as they had gone on during the reign of his predecessor.

Mr. Gibbs was a close, quiet man, grave and sparing of speech. He had known something of the Erringtons for many years, having been a crony of old Maxfield's once upon a time. Mr. Gibbs remembered seeing Algernon's smiling, rosy face and light figure flitting through the long passage at old Max's in his school-boy days. He remembered having once or twice met the majestic Mrs. Errington in the doorway; and could recollect quite well how the tinkling sound of the harpsichord and Algy's fresh young voice used to penetrate into the back parlour on

prayer-meeting nights, and fill the pauses between Brother Jackson's nasal dronings or Brother Powell's passionate supplications. Mr. Gibbs had not then conceived a favourable idea of the Erringtons, looking on them as worldly and unconverted persons, of whom Jonathan Maxfield would do well to purge his house. But Mr. Gibbs kept his official life and his private life very perfectly asunder, and he allowed no sectarian prejudices to make him rusty and unmanageable in his relations with the new postmaster.

Then, Mr. Gibbs was not altogether proof against the charm of Algy's manner. Once upon a time Algy had been pleasant to all the world, for the sheer pleasure of pleasing. Years, in their natural course, had a little hardened the ductility of his compliant manners—a little roughened the smoothness of his once almost flawless temper. But disappointment, and the—to Algernon—almost unendurable sense that he stood lower in his friends' admiration (I do not say estimation) than formerly, had changed him more rapidly than the mere course of time would have done. Still, when Mr. Ancram Errington strongly desired to attract, persuade, or fascinate, there were few persons who could resist him. He found it worth while to fascinate Mr. Gibbs, desiring not only that his clerk should carry his burthen for him, but should carry it so cheerfully and smilingly as to make him feel comfortable and complacent at having made the transfer.

I have said that disappointment had changed Algernon. He was disappointed in his marriage. It was not that he had been a victim to any romantic illusions as regarded his wife. He had had his little love-romance some time ago; had it, and tasted it, and enjoyed it as a child enjoys a fairy tale, feeling that it belongs to quite another realm from the every-day world of nursery dinners, latin grammars, and torn pinafores, and not in the least expecting to see Fanfreluche fly down the chimney into the school-room, or to find Cinderella's glass slipper on the stairs as he goes up to bed. Romances that touch the fancy only, and in which the heart has no share, are easily put off and on. Algernon had wilfully laid his romance aside, and did not regret it. Castalia's lack of charm, and sweetness, and sympathy would

not greatly have troubled him;—did he not know it all beforehand?—had she been able to help him into a brilliant position, and to cause him to be received and caressed by her noble relatives and the delightful world of fashionable society. It was not that she failed to put any sunlight into his days, and to fill his home with a sweet atmosphere of love and trust. Algy would willingly enough have dispensed with that sort of sunshine if he could but have had plenty of wax candles and fine crystal lustres for them to sparkle in. Give him a handsome suite of drawing-rooms, filled with the rich odours of pastille and pot-pourri, and Algy would make no sickly lamentations over the absence of any "sweet atmosphere" such as I have written of above. Only put his attractive figure into a suitable frame, and he would be sure to receive praise and sympathy enough, and to have a pleasant life of it.

No; he could not accuse himself of having been the victim of any sentimental illusion in marrying Castalia. And yet he had been cheated! He had bestowed himself without receiving the due quid pro quo. In a word, he began to fear that it had not been worth his while to marry the Honourable Miss Kilfinane. And sometimes the thought darted like a twinge of pain through the young man's mind—might it not have been worth his while to marry someone else?

"Someone else" was talked of as an heiress. "Someone else" was said by the gossips to be so good a match that she might have her pick of the town—aye, and a good chance among the county people! But Algernon smothered down all vain and harassing speculations founded on an "if it had been!" Neither did he by any means hopelessly resign himself to his present position, nor despair of obtaining a better one. He persisted in looking on his employment as merely provisional and temporary; so that, in fact, the worse things became in his Whitford life, the less he would do to mend them, taking every fresh disgust and annoyance as a new reason why—according to any rationally conceivable theory of events—he must speedily be removed to a region in which a gentleman of his capacities for refined enjoyment might be free to exercise them, untrammelled by vulgar cares.

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